



GOAL 13: TAKE URGENT ACTION TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS IMPACTS

'When you have gone so far that you can't manage one more step, then you've gone just half the distance that you are capable of.'
[proverb from Greenland]

One day spent with Julka from Greenland

Hej! Jeg er Julka. I am 12 years and live here in Greenland. It's funny that Greenland is called 'green' because most of the year it is all white and the landscape is covered with lots of snow. Today, right in the middle of August, the summer holiday is over and we start school again. Come with me on my way to school and I can show you what our life here is like!

The little fishing village in which we live in is called 'Itilleq; it is located 200 metres north of the Arctic Circle. Living inside the red, green, light-blue and yellow wooden houses are around 110 inhabitants. It is very quiet here because there are no cars or motorbikes on the roads. For young ones like us it is quite a boring place to be. It takes up to one hour with the boat to go North into the nearest small city of 'Sisimiut' and it takes four hours to the nearest residential area in the south. Only very occasionally there is a bit of a change and that is when the tourists come to visit us and once a month a supply vessel comes to deliver goods. That is why we always have to have a strict plan as to what foods and goods we need for every day.

The grown-ups get a living from hunting seals, reindeers and musk oxen as well as fishing. Codfish is probably the most common and popular fish over here. As you can imagine there is only just enough work for our community to survive but nobody can make a lot of money from hunting.

Today it is 7 degrees Celsius – that probably does not sound like summer weather to you but for us it's really warm. In the winter it can get as cold as minus 49 degrees Celsius, so sometimes when I spit in the air you can hear

a clinking sound a second later – that is my spit turning immediately into ice. However, every year the temperature rises. The researchers say that this is the result of climate change, which in turn causes the glaciers to melt. Just listen – can you hear the rumbling and tumbling? That is not a thunderstorm, it is a glacier sliding its way down to the water. Unfortunately, this is now happening more frequently. Over there you can see the modern research laboratory. One of the researchers came to our school and taught us that the amount of ice that has fallen from the glaciers into the sea has doubled in the past ten years. The ice sheet which covers the ground in Greenland is extremely thick – 3000 metres. That is three kilometres of ice – can you imagine that? Of course this ice cover does not melt that quickly but if people in the world continue to live in the way that they do now, then in 2100 a lot of ice will have melted and this will have led to the sea level being one and a half metres higher than it is now. This will cause flooding in a lot of islands and coastal regions.

Climate change is also dangerous for animals because for many species the melting ice is causing their habitat to shrink. That in turn means that there are less fish to catch and animals to hunt. Our sledge dogs used to be really important when we went hunting, nowadays we only breed them as a hobby.

Behind the football fields over there, the green house that you can see, is our school. I look forward going to school every day. Our teacher has taught us Danish, English and my mother tongue Greenlandic, which is a throaty language with many sounds of 's' and 'sh'. Our teacher says that we won't need any more fishermen/women or hunters but we will need a good education so that we can become carpenters, engineers or doctors. I would like to become a researcher, so that I can study climate change. I want people to take action against climate change – we need to start now, before it is too late!





Climate Action — Reduce global warming and improve living conditions for all

The temperature on this earth is rising. That is why we talk about global warming. This is caused by greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane or nitrous oxide. CO₂ is mainly generated through the burning of coal and petrol. Cars, aeroplanes and other machines produce a lot of greenhouse gases. According to some tests taken, the CO₂ in the atmosphere has increased by one third in the last 100 years. That is probably the highest figure measured in the last 15-20 million years. Air pollution created by humans has resulted in the rise of the world-wide temperature which in turn has caused the melting of glaciers on the North and South Poles. These snow and ice surfaces act like big ice cubes cooling our air and water but as these surfaces become smaller the temperature rises. We need to break out of this vicious circle! Climate change makes the weather go crazy. In some areas in the world it never rains and in other areas there are heavy floods. This is particularly bad for the countries of the global south where longer periods of droughts cause extreme famines.

Another consequence of global warming is that the sea level rises on average about 2.5 mm every year due to the melting of the polar ice caps and glacial ice. The melted ice in Greenland results in a significant increase in the amount of water. If the sea level continues to rise as it is at the moment many islands and coastal regions will soon be underwater.

Goal 13 therefore calls for action against climate change. Further warming will have dramatic repercussions for all humankind. In order to stop this we have to work together. Every country will have to make a fair contribution in their efforts to switch from fossil fuels (crude oil, coal) to renewable energy (wind turbines, solar panels, hydropower plants).

Goal 13 calls upon all countries to cooperate with each other and support each other to put in place national policies and measures that develop and support climate protection.

A world-wide early warning system for all meteorological disasters, such as tsunamis or droughts needs to be established alongside systems that provide fast help in the case of natural disasters. The richer states have

already committed themselves to financially supporting poorer countries implement effective measures to combat climate change.

What can we do to help achieve this goal?

- Half of the motorways in Austria are shorter than 6 kilometres. Short distances result in excessive fuel consumption. This can be prevented. Short distances can be walked, or cycled or people can use public transport rather than getting in your car.
- Communities, schools and businesses should fight against climate change and join the Climate Alliance. In Austria we already have 1,000 climate-alliance communities that fight for climate justice. You can find more information here: www.klimabuendnis.at
- JUMP is a youth platform where you can get information on how to take action against climate change in Austria. It gives information on events, workshops and publication on environmental and sustainability topics. On the website you can find useful information, such as the 'voluntary environmental year': www.jugendumwelt.at

Vincent (10)

from Bad Fischau, Lower Austria:

'When I visit my family in Germany I take the train. I don't go by plane because this is bad for the environment. I much prefer going by train anyway.'

**Ceyda (16) from St. Georgen,
Längsee, Carinthia:**

'I am head girl and I talked to our school headmaster because I want our school to join the Climate Alliance Austria.'